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WARDLAW, REV. DR.

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SPEECH OF THE REV.
DR. WARDLAW...

PLACE:

GLASGOW

DATE:

1834

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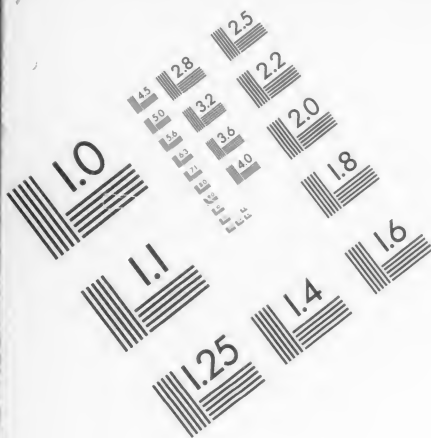
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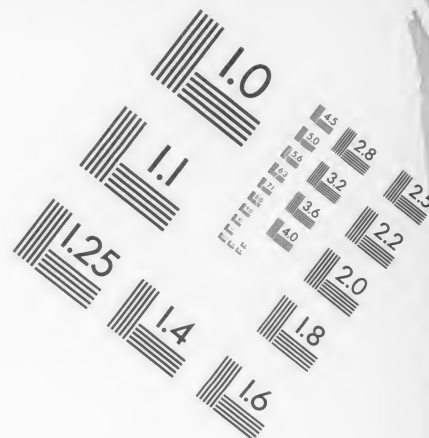
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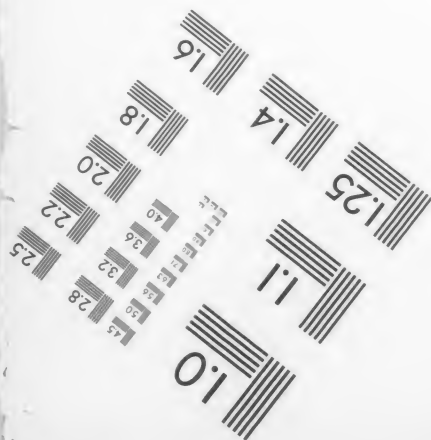
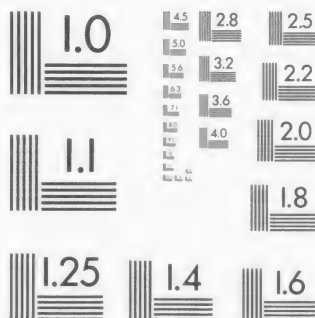
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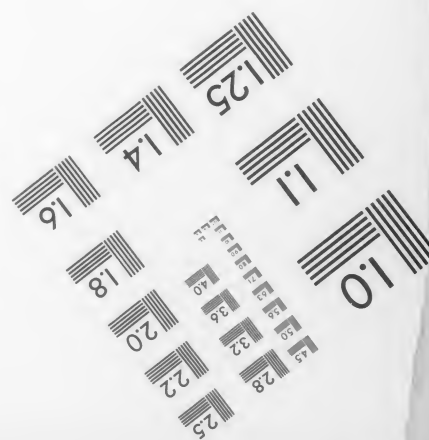
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No. 11.

SPEECH
OF THE
REV. DR WARDLAW,
AT THE
PUBLIC MEETING IN GLASGOW,
FOR THE
SEPARATION
OF
CHURCH AND STATE,
MARCH 6TH, 1834.

WITH THE
MEMORIAL TO EARL GREY, AND THE PETITION TO
PARLIAMENT, ADOPTED AT THE MEETING.

Second Edition.

WITH
AN APPENDIX:
EXPOSURE FURTHER EXPOSED.

GLASGOW:
DAVID ROBERTSON;
JOHN WARDLAW, EDINBURGH; L. SMITH, ABERDEEN;
WESTLEY & DAVIS, LONDON.

MDCCCXXXIV.

TO THE PUBLIC.

IN my "Exposure" of the falsehoods of Anglo-Scotus, I introduced a statement of the revenue and expenditure of the Glasgow city Churches. For this I have been very bitterly dealt with, as doing the very thing myself for which I censured him. The plain truth is this:—My manuscript had gone to press without any reference in it whatever to the Glasgow city Churches. While engaged in correcting the proof-sheets, the obnoxious statement happened to come in; and finding it entitled "*Official Statement* of Church accommodation, &c. &c.;" and never doubting that it was what by its title it purported to be, of the same authority with that of Edinburgh; I conceived myself warranted in giving it insertion. Its official character is now, I find, denied. That point must be settled by those immediately concerned:—and perhaps it may prove to have in it more of what its title imports than the Editors of the Church of Scotland Magazine, or their informants, were aware. We shall see. Meantime, I have only to say for myself, that had I entertained the least doubt of the statement being "*official*," I should not have inserted it, as I have no inclination to take part in the controversy respecting statistics. The counter-statement, which has appeared in the said Magazine, will, I doubt not, be *sifted* by those who are accustomed to that process.

I may take this opportunity also of saying, that the statements of Anglo-Scotus having no reference whatever to the time when West George Street Chapel was erected (1819), it was not deemed at all necessary to go back to that period. We were then indebted for contributions towards it from various friends of different religious denominations, for which they had our thanks at the time; and for which, lest we should be thought forgetful of our obligations, we thus publicly thank them again. But they have not the remotest connexion with the statements of Anglo-Scotus.

SPEECH, &c.

MR CHAIRMAN,

I RISE to propose, as introductory to the proper business of this evening, the following general Resolution :—

That, in the judgment of this meeting, civil establishments of Christianity have, for their basis, principles subversive of those on which the Christian Church, the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ, was originally constituted; that they imply an unauthorized delegation to the civil power of prerogatives and duties, which, by Divine institute, belong inalienably to the Church itself; that they especially nullify the primitive ordinance of the Church's only Head, for the support of his ministers and his cause, by the substitution in its room of an anti-evangelical system of compulsory provision; that, by thus taking the support of religion out of the hands of the Church itself, they paralyse and deaden the principles of personal and social liberality and zeal, and materially impede the prosperity and progress of the Gospel; that, both in theory and in fact, their tendency is to secularise the Church, to debase the purity of her communion, to produce and maintain the fatal prevalence of a merely nominal Christianity, and, by confounding all descriptions of character under a common designation, to obscure the practical evidence of its truth, and engender scepticism and infidelity; that, by instituting a chartered monopoly in favour of one religious sect, and, for its support, invading the rights of conscience in others, they violate the claims of righteousness and impartiality, and foster the spirit of jealousy, alienation, and discord; that, on these and other grounds, they are equally at variance with the maxims of sound political jurisprudence, and with the best interests of Christianity.

In coming forward on such an occasion, Sir, I cannot shut my eyes to the conviction, that I am rendering my-

self by the step more obnoxious than ever to the disapprobation and displeasure, the coldness and alienation, of a large portion of my fellow-christians:—and I should, at the same time, belie all the feelings of my heart, were I to say that I am indifferent to such a consequence. To regard with lightness and scorn the esteem and affection of those whom, in spite of the differences between us, I must value as the excellent of the earth, would be contrary to every principle and every precept of my Bible, and to the entire spirit of the gospel. No, Sir:—I hold in high estimation the communion of the people of God, and I deeply regret whatever tends to interrupt, to circumscribe, and to mar it.—But I have counted the cost. I have weighed all such consequences against the obligation that lies upon me to maintain what in my conscience I believe to be important principles of the divine word. And it is under the commanding influence of such a paramount conviction, that I appear before this audience to-night.

Sir, allow me to begin by observing, what can never be too constantly borne in mind, that the present question is one not at all of *persons* but of *principles*. There are ministers in the Church of Scotland, and not a few of them, whom I must ever “esteem very highly in love for their work’s sake,”—faithful, conscientious, laborious servants of the same Master; “workmen that need not to be ashamed,” who are “instant in season and out of season,” and “make full proof of their ministry.” I have no quarrel with them. I bid them God speed; and I give them the credit for sincerity which I claim for myself. I feel no inclination to bestow designations and epithets upon my brethren in the Establishment, such as it is unworthy of Christian men to take into their lips, and which are more degrading to those into whose lips they are taken, than to those on whom they are contumeliously lavished. The question of Church Establishments is one which ought to be calmly and temperately discussed,—the appeal being made to the only legitimate and competent authority, the Holy Scriptures;—the inspired record of the laws of the kingdom. It is only on this ground, so far as principle

is concerned, that the case can be brought to a satisfactory settlement.

I may be asked—Why then do you propose to memorialize his majesty’s ministers and to petition both houses of parliament? Is such procedure in harmony with your avowed convictions? Why not make your appeal—your persevering appeal—to principle, and to principle alone, and work out your object by argument and persuasion?—To such an inquiry, I would answer in the first place, that so far as I am concerned, (and I presume I speak the sentiments of all about me,) I would much rather have carried the point we have in view, by the diffusion and influence of principle, than by any other means. But then, the expectation of the result from a mere general paper war, would have been a very idle one. Books by scores, pamphlets by hundreds, and tracts by thousands, might have been published;—and then, when the last on either side had left the press, the controversy might have fallen asleep, and the alliance in question have remained just as it was at the commencement. It is evident, that this alliance must be dissolved by the act of one or other or both of the parties. The Church must throw off the State, or the State must throw off the Church, or they must mutually agree to separate. When, therefore, I say that I would rather have effected our end by an appeal to principles, let me be understood;—I mean, that, had there been even the faintest glimmer of hope, to encourage such a proceeding,—instead of memorializing his majesty’s ministers and petitioning parliament, I should have proposed to memorialize the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; to argue the case with our brethren; to convince them of their error; to induce them, by all the considerations the word of God could furnish, to repudiate the partner of the anti-christian union which they have so long maintained; to assert the independent dignity of the Church of the living God; to throw off the yoke; to refuse any longer to be indebted for her support to any thing beyond her own voluntary resources, and for aid in pursuing her spiritual and glorious career to any thing

else than the providence and the Spirit of her living Head. This, Sir, I own, I should have reckoned a far more desirable and noble triumph than the one at which we are constrained to aim. I should have exulted to witness this splendid manifestation of the disinterested power of principle;—this indignant and holy spurning of a state of dependance, which had borne the deceitful semblance of an honour, but was now felt to be a disgrace. Perhaps we may have been wrong, Sir, in considering this a hopeless course:—but I presume it has only been its assumed hopelessness that has prevented its ever being suggested.

Sir, it is invariably assumed, that, in the course we are pursuing, we are aiming at the destruction of the Church. I have myself repeatedly, and so have others, protested against this representation. So far, Sir, from seeking her destruction, I do not even seek her injury. My firm and *bond fide* conviction is, that in prosecuting our present course we are consulting the benefit, the real and essential benefit of the Church herself;—not her loss, but her gain; not her dishonour, but her glory; not her destruction, but her true and permanent stability.—Sir, I must be permitted to say, however obnoxious the term may be, I desire the Church's *emancipation*;—her emancipation from a self-imposed but dishonourable bondage,—and her establishment in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made her free. I wish her emancipated, for example, from the unseemly bondage of having her supreme court, before any of its enactments can be legal, constituted not in the name of the King of Zion alone, but of the king of Great Britain. I wish her delivered from the thralldom and the indignity, of not having it in her power to introduce the slightest alteration in her doctrinal articles of faith, or in the rules of her government and the forms of her procedure, without the concurrent sanction of the civil magistrate,—so that, though the General Assembly were coming to the conviction that any particular change was required by the mind of Christ, it could not, without an immediate forfeiture of its chartered privileges, proceed upon that conviction, unless the king and

the parliament saw with the same eyes, and gave the sanction of a civil act to the alteration!* I wish her freed from the servile yoke, of not being able to determine how her own ministers shall be chosen and nominated to their pastoral cures, without stirring the whole country to petition the legislature for its gracious permission,—pleading humbly and submissively for the abolition of old acts and the passing of new ones!† Are not trammels like these unworthy of the scriptural and

* “The civil magistrate is entitled to know the opinions of the community of Christians to whom he imparts the benefits of an Establishment. He adopted that community in preference to others from the knowledge which he then had of their tenets, and if they were to embrace opinions essentially different, he might see cause to withdraw that preference. Hence confessions of faith, which, ecclesiastically considered, are an exposition of the truth prepared by the society of teachers to direct their own ministrations, and to warn the people against error, become a declaration to the State of the opinions and principles held by the ministers of the established religion; and subscription to confessions, or articles of religion, is a solemn pledge to the civil magistrate, that they will not, without his knowledge, make any change upon that system of doctrine which had received his sanction.”—*Principal Hill's View of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland, Part II. Sect. 1.*

† “The Church of Scotland complained of this Act (the act of 1712) as an invasion of its privileges, made various ineffectual efforts to obtain a repeal of the act, and, during a great part of the last century, gave annual instructions to the Commission of the General Assembly to make due application to the king and parliament for redress of the grievance of patronage, in case a favourable opportunity for so doing should occur. But since the year 1784 this article has been left out of the instructions given to the Commission. A great majority of the members of the church, both ministers and laymen, are now convinced that patronage affords the most convenient method of settling vacant parishes;—and, whatever difference of opinion may still prevail upon the question of expediency, few pretend to doubt that patronage is the law of the land, interpreted and confirmed by various decisions of the civil courts, and by the uniform train of the judgments pronounced by the church during a long course of years.”—*Principal Hill's View of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland, Part II. Sect. 3.* Whether the applications now making to parliament on the same subject, not indeed by the supreme court of the church, but in various quarters by the popular voice, will prove more effectual than at the time referred to, remains to be seen. But, whatever be the result, it is, on neither supposition, the less humiliating to think, that the determination of the practice of the church in the election of her own ministers to their respective charges should rest with a committee of the House of Commons! *Proh pudor!*

independent dignity of the Church of God? In the New Testament, I find one authority only recognised as binding in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. It is the authority of Jesus Christ himself, or, which is the same thing, of his vicegerents the apostles. I cannot but loathe most indignantly seeing the Church thus dishonoured, by what I can regard in no other light than as a state of inferiority and subjection. When we read of acts of parliament "*allowing*" the meetings of assemblies, "declaring that *it shall be lawful* to the kirk and ministers," to "hold and keep them;"—and of "the presence of the Lord High Commissioner," as "the gracious pledge of protection and countenance to the Established Church, and the symbol of that sanction which the civil authority is ready to give to its legal acts,"—instead of envying the honour, I blush for the degradation.

"The Church of Scotland," says an eminent authority of her own, "claims the right of meeting in a general assembly, as well as in inferior courts, by its own appointment. But it also recognises the right of the supreme magistrate to call synods and to be present at them: and these two rights are easily reconciled, when there subsists between the Church and the State that good understanding which all the true friends of both will study to cultivate."*—But this good understanding

* "As by the constitution of the Church of Scotland," continues Principal Hill, "the ecclesiastical business of this country cannot be conducted without the frequent meetings of General Assemblies, the act, 1592, which established Presbyterian government, declares, that '*it shall be lawful* to the kirk and ministers, every year at the least, and oftener *pro re nata*, as occasion and necessity shall require, to hold and keep General Assemblies.' And the act, 1690, which restored Presbyterian government at the revolution, *allows* the general meeting and representatives of the ministers and elders, in whose hands the exercise of the church government is established according to the custom and practice of Presbyterian church government throughout the whole kingdom. In pursuance of these acts, the General Assembly meets annually in the month of May, and continues to sit for ten days; at the end of which time it is dissolved, first by the Moderator, who appoints another Assembly to be held upon a certain day of the month of May in the following year, and then by the Lord High Commissioner, who, in his Majesty's name, appoints another

has not at all times been maintained:—and, for evidence of the spirited independence of the Church, we have been recently referred to cases in which the attempt of the king to interfere with and put a stop to ecclesiastical proceedings has been resisted, even under heavy penalties;—and to other cases, in which the clergy, had they chosen to acquiesce in the dicta of the magistrate, might easily by such acquiescence have retained their glebes and manses, and temporal advantages; but in which they preferred, as the result of refusing conformity, to "take joyfully the spoiling of their goods," and to submit to every privation and distress. Far be it from me to detract, in the slightest degree, from the credit due either to church courts or to individuals, who, in peculiar circumstances, have manifested the resolute intrepidity and the noble disinterestedness of steadfast principle. No, Sir: I trust I shall ever admire the spirit of Christian heroism, by whomsoever displayed. But my question is—*Why did there exist such a power to be resisted?* and, when resisted, why was it *under heavy penalties?*—and whence came the power that deprived the conscientious clergy of their livings, and deprived their flocks of their superintendence and labours? Are we told, that that was the *abuse* of power? I still ask, *Why did the power exist to be abused?* The power abused was the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion,—the power imparted by the consent of the Church, and exercised by the magistrate under the impression of his right and prerogative to act as the Church's Head. But for this impression, such scenes had never been enacted;—and but for the establishment of religion, there had never been this impression. All has arisen out of that most antisciptural and most irrational position in the standards of our own Establishment,—that "the magistrate has authority to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be accord-

Assembly to be held upon the day which had been mentioned by the Moderator."—*Principal Hill's View of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland, Part II. Sect. 4.* They are easily pleased who are pleased with this *shadow* of precedence.

ing to the mind of God." It is the recognition of this power that has been, not the innocent occasion, but the guilty cause, of all the mischief:—a power nowhere recognised in the New Testament, but alike opposed to its spirit and its letter.

Sir, this unhallowed alliance of the Church with the State is not an alliance of equality.—The latter is the superior. This is, in various ways, apparent. It is apparent in the very fact, of the Church petitioning the State, in regard to matters which, if there be any whatever that are deserving of the designation, are strictly and properly *Ecclesiastical*. What can be more so, for instance, than the manner of electing and settling her own ministers? Yet this must be the subject of petition. The Church must *pray* the State to favour her with an alteration in the laws on this point:—nor can she take a single step, without gracious parliamentary and royal permission. Sir, I repeat, I *loathe* this. I regard all such applications as acknowledging an authority that has no existence, and as utterly degrading to the Church of God.—The superiority is apparent also in another thing, that although, as I have said, the General Assembly might decline any longer to be indebted to the State for support, and might, by such declinature, withdraw from the connexion;—there is a far higher power exercised in refusing to *give* than in refusing to *receive*. This is the State's part of the power—the power to *put away*—the power to *withhold*.^{*}—This is a state of real vassalage and dependence. We have been charged with "*insidious designs*." I hate the word, Sir; and I disown the thing. Our simple object is, to

^{*} It is not His Grace of Canterbury that says, There shall be no alteration in the connection between the Church and the State;—it is Earl Grey:—not the Ecclesiastical, but the civil Premier.—The power given to the King in the Church, and the power given to the Bishops in the State, are alike incongruous. But alas! how mortifyingly small is the latter! and withal how insecure and dependant! The power of the State does not depend on the will of the Ecclesiastics, but the power of the Ecclesiastics on the will of the State. The House of Lords may at any time *vote the Bishops out*, by simply *out-voting* the Bishops.—Are these the Heaven-derived privileges, and inalienable prerogatives, of the Church of the living God?

bring back the Church of Christ to its first principles,—to save it from the contamination and the thralldom of earthly alliances, and to assert its purity and its freedom.

There is no inconsistency between our principles and the act of petitioning. We do not petition for legislation in the Church; we petition for the cessation of legislation. Our sentiment is, that there ought never to have subsisted any such union:—but since, through the errors of human counsel, it does subsist, we apply to the only authority to which we have access, that has power to dissolve it:—and in doing so, we act, not in the capacity of members of churches, but in our capacity as British subjects, availing ourselves of our fair and legitimate prerogative.

Amongst the "*insidious designs*" we are supposed to have in view, is a participation in the spoils,—in the glebes, and manses, and endowments. Then why, Sir, I would ask, are we Dissenters?—Why have we ever been Dissenters? If we had panted for the blessings of the Establishment; if our envious appetites had keenly longed after the loaves and fishes; might we not have been in it? We wanted nothing to our entrance there but a little of an *Indian rubber conscience*. We had only to put it on the stretch, and all the coveted benefits might have been ours.—Sir, I feel as if I were stooping from the dignity which becomes us, in so much as noticing such a thing. Let it be understood once for all, that we do not plead merely for the doing away of the *monopoly*, in the sense of admitting others to the same privileges,—so that all sects should alike be taken under the wing, and pensioned from the bounty of the State. We plead for the *doing away of all State provision together*. We seek not that *we* should be placed on the same footing with *them*, but that *they* should be placed on the same footing with *us*. I repudiate with scorn all *Regium Donums*, and every thing of the same beggarly kind, and regret that any body of Dissenters, or any individual ministers, should ever have let themselves down to the acceptance of them. What we honestly wish is, that religion should be left, as in

the beginning of the Gospel, to its own native energies and resources:—that the State, in one word, should “let it alone.”

As to another of our “insidious designs,” the design of pulling down all the churches, (I mean, of course, the stone and lime churches,) not leaving one stone upon another,—merely for the pleasure of having them built up again on the voluntary principle,—the absurdity of it is too gross to allow of our giving him who alleges it credit for sincerity. No, no: our friends may keep themselves quite easy on that score. We have not the remotest intention of repeating the famous Knoxian experiment, of dispersing the rooks by pulling down the nests.

But in what we are now about, we are seriously, and I believe with the utmost sincerity of apprehension, admonished that we are trying a “*fearful experiment*.” I believe the apprehension, on the part of many who speak so, to be sincere, not for the Church of Scotland merely, but for the interests, and for the very existence in the country, of true religion. I am, of course, as far as possible from thinking the apprehension well-founded; but persuaded of its sincerity in many minds, I give them all due credit for it, while I would seek to remove it. Allow me to make this allegation, then, that what we are doing is a *fearful experiment*,—the text of what I have still to say. In meeting the allegation, then, I have to say—

In the first place,—that I disown the idea of *experiment* altogether. Experiment proceeds on the assumption, that we are to find out the best principle, or the most eligible plan, of procedure, *by trial*, by bringing various principles and plans to the test of experience; that we are to try different ways, in order to find out the right way. Now, this is what I must be permitted to deny. The case before us is in no respect a case of this kind. The constitution of the Christian Church is not a matter to be ascertained by trial. The nature and laws of the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ are not to be settled by a process of experimenting. The question is one, to which the answer must be

sought by a direct appeal to Divine authority,—to the statute-book of the kingdom. Let it not be called, therefore, an experiment, far less a fearful experiment. Let us fix it in our minds, as a position from which nothing can dislodge us, that divinely sanctioned principles not only may be, but ever ought to be, followed out without fear. I know no principle more important than this,—that whenever we have ascertained a divine prescription, we should follow it fearlessly;—that there never can be danger of injurious effects from a strict adherence to the institutes of infinite wisdom. Once show me the mind of God,—what he wills,—and you have determined *duty*. That instant, I close my ear to all the argumentations of human expediency. My course is fixed. Reasonings and fears then become alike impious. I give them all to the winds.—Sir, what is it that is properly entitled to the designation of a *fearful experiment*? It is not that which we are seeking to *do*; it is that which we are seeking to *undo*. The fearful experiment lay in the *departure* from divine principles; in the devolution upon the State of what had been the duty and prerogative of the Church; in the introduction of the power of the civil magistrate into the spiritual kingdom of Christ; in the substitution of the compulsory for the voluntary; and of the sword of earthly power for the sword of the Spirit. Yes, Sir, *this* was the “*fearful experiment*,”—the experiment by which it was to be tried, how human plans and human principles would do, in lieu of those which divine wisdom had followed in the original constitution of the New Testament Church. Every experiment of this kind may well be called a fearful one; but there can be nothing fearful in a return to Bible principles. I have no sympathy with the timidity of those who indulge apprehensive forebodings from such a step. *They*, Sir, are properly the Dissenters, who dissent from the Apostles, and from the churches in Judea, which were in Christ. In this view I must be allowed to regard our brethren of the Establishment as the Dissenters; and instead of saying to my fellow-christians, “Let us plant our foot upon the ground held by Knox and the

other reformers," I would rather say, Let us plant our foot upon the ground held by Paul and the other Apostles. We need never fear to resume that ground. It is rock; all else is shifting and unstable sand.

My second observation is this,—that I am not aware of its ever having been denied, that the New Testament Church was originally constituted on the voluntary principle; that this was the only principle in operation at its outset. This is admitted. How, indeed, can it possibly be questioned? I ask, then, under whose auspices did the Church begin? Who were at the founding of it? The answer, the only answer, is,—the inspired Apostles of Jesus Christ,—those very men of whom Jesus Christ said,—“He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.” In these circumstances, I confess, I covet not the responsibility of those who, granting this to have been the original state of things, venture to speak of the voluntary principle, in such terms of disparagement, and condemnation, and ridicule, as have been applied to it. It has been represented, in no measured terms of obloquy, as the real origin of all the corruption and mischief that have ever befallen the Church. I do not at present quote any of the various forms in which it has been impugned and scouted. There are plenty from which to select, as every body knows. What I wish is, that those who write and speak thus, would only bethink themselves, where their objections, and their jibes and sarcasms, ultimately light. They laugh at “*the Voluntaries*”; but were not the Apostles Voluntaries? Were not the primitive Christians Voluntaries? They have never denied that; they *cannot* deny that. They may say,—for indeed such things have been said,—that the first Churches acted as they did, under existing circumstances, because they *could do no better*. In this respect, they may allege, the primitive Christians were *not* Voluntaries; or at any rate, they were voluntaries only through the constraint of circumstances; voluntaries because they could not help it; voluntaries, who, as they sometimes allege of us too,

would have taken the aid of the State, could they have got it! Here again, I would beseech them to consider, on whom, in effect, this imputation of impotency falls. When it is said, *they* could do no better, to what does it amount? to what, but that Jesus Christ, with “all power in heaven and in earth” committed into his hands, could do no better? that God, the governor among the nations, who “turns the hearts of men as the rivers of water, whithersoever he will,” could do no better? If we are told it was best for the then existing circumstances of the Church, but *intended to be otherwise afterwards*; this is precisely what we want proved, in order to our acquiescing in the propriety and authority of a change. Let the intimation of any such intention be shown us in the New Testament, and we give in. Till then, we must continue to hold, that the Church remains the same, and that the same constitution which suited it originally was intended to be universal and permanent.

I have to say, thirdly, in regard to this “fearful experiment,” that the voluntary principle, on which the Church was originally constituted, continued in operation for centuries; and we have now to see what is the ground of complaint against it. The objection incessantly reiterated in our ears used to be, that the voluntary principle was necessarily capricious and fickle,—that it was inefficient, unproductive, and by no means to be trusted to. Other ground, however, has now been taken. So far as the experience of the first three centuries goes, we are now told that the great evil of the principle was its *over-productiveness*—the *excess* of its efficiency. Its operation brought into the Church such a tide of wealth, as to be the means of originating and progressively augmenting its corruption and degeneracy. I admit, to no small extent, the truth of the representation; that various principles of a superstitious nature intruded themselves into the church at an early period; and that there were not wanting amongst the clergy those who were disposed to avail themselves of an appeal to such principles for mercenary and self-aggrandizing ends. But because a principle has been abused,

does it follow that it ought to be relinquished? Is it not rather our business to retain the principle, and to correct and beware of the perversion of it? We might as well relinquish the Lord's Supper because it degenerated into the Mass; or abandon the popular election of our spiritual teachers because it too has been abused, and submit to some law of patronage. The productiveness of the principle, on the showing of our friends on the other side themselves, has been abundantly proved. But the theory in behalf of Establishments, now constructed on the basis of this fact, is a very curious one. In consequence, it seems, of the excessive profusion with which the voluntary principle poured wealth into the church, an establishment became necessary, in the way of a salutary check, to repress and regulate the operation of a *too* productive principle, and so to stem the tide of corruption that had set in from that source! I cannot now enter into an examination of this novel ground of the defence of Establishments. I only offer two simple remarks upon it. The first is, that we should never hear more of the *inefficiency* of the voluntary principle; for, while we are assured on the very best authority, of its primitive productiveness in the apostolic churches, we have it contended by our opponents themselves, that it was the very excess of its productiveness which in aftertimes was the inlet of all evil to the church. The second is, that if, upon their own showing, this was the case till the time of the institution of Establishments, then does the complaint of the unproductiveness of the same principle in *our* days, come with a peculiarly bad grace from their advocates, seeing the cause of this complaint is traceable to the very institutions which we wish to remove. If, indeed, it was the design of Establishments to operate with a repressing influence on a principle that had run wild in the luxuriance of its liberality, the end, it must be confessed, has been most signally accomplished. They *have* repressed it,—and repressed it to a degree that has furnished our adversaries with the argument (so far as it goes) of its inefficiency. And I am quite ready to grant, that, after, for so many ages, the *onus* of the support of the church has been taken off

from individuals and Christian societies, and laid upon the shoulders of the State, and, in this posture of things, habits the most inveterate have been formed and fostered, it will be no easy matter to rouse the ancient principle to any thing like its primitive energy, and its primitive productiveness;—to give its original elasticity to the unused and rusted spring;—to open the fountain that has so long been sealed;—to roll the stone from the sepulchre, in which, since the days of Constantine, Christian charity has lain dead and entombed, and bring her forth to the warmth, and vigour, and activity, of her youthful prime. This, however, is what we wish to do, with the aid and direction of the Divine Head of the Church. And we have no fears of the result. It is our firmly settled conviction, that, when all invidious distinctions are done away, and Christianity is thrown upon its own resources, and left to the emulous efforts of spontaneous liberality, we shall see scenes of novel enterprise and Christian prosperity, such as our country, with all its many advantages and blessings, has never yet witnessed.

I am the more confirmed in this conviction, by the only remaining observation I have now to make, viz. In the fourth place,—That, while we go back with confidence for our principles, and for the manifestation of their efficiency, to primitive times, and might fairly and fully rest our cause there,—we have, at the same time, an example of their operation now before us, on a large scale, and of the most interesting and imposing nature. I feel no disposition to shrink or hesitate, in naming as that example—the *United States of America*.^{*}—And here I would, with all affection and earnestness, pray my brethren of the Establishment, to beware, for the sake of their own gratification, of allowing any biasing influence of party prejudice so to sway their minds, as to prevent them from enjoying, with the full flow of devout emotion, the interesting “works of charity and labours of love,” of which that land is at this

^{*} I introduce this, not, of course, as an argument from Scripture, but simply as a practical exemplification of the efficiency of a Scripture principle.

day the theatre.—I would most earnestly recommend to a careful perusal, by all who take an interest in the progress of Christianity, and especially by such as are sceptical about the operation of the voluntary principle in America, a pamphlet by Mr Calvin Colton, an American minister, at present residing in London,—entitled ‘Church and State in America.’ It is a production which, making all possible allowance for the partialities of national attachment and predilection, contains in its various statements of fact, apart from all its reasonings—(its reasonings, indeed, may be said mainly to consist in its facts)—the most delightful manifestation of the irrepressible elasticity of the springs of Christian beneficence, when left to the spontaneous unconstrained energy of Christian principle for its impulse.—There should, in regard to America, be borne in mind, the amazing rapidity with which its population advances, and the difficulty, consequently, of keeping pace with it, in providing the supply of general and especially of religious instruction:—and yet, notwithstanding this, such has been of late the corresponding rapidity in the advance of the latter, that they who go back but a very few years for their estimate of the true state of things, are liable to the most egregious errors, in consequence of the progress made in the short interval.—I shall beg leave to read a brief extract or two from this important publication: but before doing so, there is one remark which it is of consequence to offer;—namely, that in three of the New England States, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, there was for a time a description of Establishment, passing under the designation of “the Standing Order.”—In the two former, this state of things, by successive steps, was finally done away about nine years ago;—and the experience of the results, both in Connecticut and New Hampshire, so far from deterring Massachusetts from following the example, has proved of such a nature, that she has recently, it is understood, done the same thing—annulling the “Standing Order,” and placing all sects upon the same level. Let us see, then, from one or two short specimens, how matters stand; and especially how

the principle operates there, which we are solicitous to introduce amongst ourselves. We shall find one or two of the citations most encouragingly analogous to our own condition.

“It is true, as I need not say, that the population of the United States has increased and spread itself out, perhaps beyond example; certainly with a rapidity, that has attracted attention. It *was* true, and no wonder, that the advances of religion did not keep pace with this leaping and bounding over the hills and mountains, and this running into the far and wide vale of the West. It *was* true, that the prophets, the discerning minds of the age, began to look out on this spreading of the people, and to forecast their benevolent devices. They began to stir themselves, to inform and stir the public mind. They took great pains to collect information; to obtain an estimate of the number of Christian ministers in the field: of the ratio of their decrease by death, and of their increase by education; of the ratio of increase in the population, and of the requisite increase of the ministers of religion to supply them. In a word, they numbered the people and their religious teachers. They decided, that it was proper and needful for the best interests of society, to have *one* minister to every *thousand souls* in the land, and found an actual deficiency in no inconsiderable portion, being, as nearly as I recollect, about *one* minister to every *two* thousand souls. On estimating the average annual increase of ministers, so far as could be ascertained, and the annual increase of population, the latter so far outrun the former in relative proportion of the acknowledged want, as to afford a most alarming prospect. I do not remember precisely what time this estimate was fairly and fully before the American public. It is near enough to say *ten years ago*, and that it occupied five years previous in being made. I hardly need say, that since this actual and prospective want of ministers became known, the most intense interest has been felt among all denominations of Christians, and one united, systematic, and well-sustained effort has been made to supply the demand. Besides the ordinary schools of training and methods of induction to the sacred office, all of which have been employed with increasing and especial energy, under a common and urgent sense of the special demand, a new and extra device, called Education Societies, organized expressly for selecting and preparing suitable young men, by a regular course of education, for the Christian ministry, has already brought forward many additional hundreds into the field, and presents a constantly accumulating corps in a course of preparation.’ Pages 6, 7.

“ By the last census of 1830, the population of the United States was 12,866,020. Allowing 300 Roman Catholic priests, we shall then have of all denominations, as may be seen, full *one* minister for every *thousand souls* by the estimate of the last census. Deducting the Roman Catholics and those not esteemed Orthodox, all of which, in their own connexions, doubtless have their influence in promoting morality and securing the good order of society, we shall still have 11,138, whose Christianity is generally sound, whose qualifications are for the most part fitted for the several classes of society, among which their labours are distributed, and a very great proportion of whom would not suffer by comparison in piety and professional learning with any set of men of the same class in the Christian world, when viewed *en masse*, and in their ordinary relations to society.

“ Thus much, to show, that rapidly as the population of the United States has increased, the virtue of the Christian public there, having been roused by information and suitable appeals, has not only kept pace with this march in supplying a proportionate number of the ministers of religion, but has actually gained upon it, and bids fair, in these provisions for the spiritual wants of the people, soon to attain the limits of its aspirations.” * Page 9.

“ It happened, also, that one of the two great political parties of New England, was highly charged with the same leaven (of infidelity); and that this party hated the Establishment, and sought its ruin, because, to a considerable extent, it hated all religion. Infidelity identified religion with the ‘Standing Order;’

* On the subject of education for the ministry, the following sentences are interesting:—“ The Presbyterian and Congregational denominations alone have more than 1200 pious young men in a course of training for the ministry, who are sustained by the liberality of the churches; besides a great number who have the means of meeting the expense of their own education.”—“ The Education Societies are, for the most part, voluntary associations, in distinction from those which are under denominational or ecclesiastical supervision. It may be assumed, I should think, within limits of truth, that these societies, including those of all denominations, have 2000 young men in a course of education for the ministry, in addition to the number which would have been in training without these special exertions.”—“ The literary and theological course of a candidate for the ministry with us, commonly embraces from seven to nine years.”—“ There is a disposition manifested by all the evangelical denominations to elevate the substantial qualifications of candidates for the ministry. Episcopalians, Baptists, Methodists, &c. are getting up their theological seminaries in all directions, and filling them with able professors. *More has been done for Christianity in these respects within the last ten years than had been accomplished in the preceding fifty years.*”

and the ‘Standing Order’ identified the obnoxious party with infidelity. Dr Dwight was too discerning not to discover the symptoms working in the public mind, and too prophetic not to anticipate the possible results. Popular prejudices against the Establishment increased, spreading in extent, and augmenting their influence; and with Dr Dwight, and I may say, with the generality of good men, (for it must be confessed, that the great bulk of the intelligence, and religion, and the most exemplary virtues of that part of the country, were on the same side,) the simple question, as the controversy in all its aspects presented itself to their minds, was, the maintenance of the then present order of things, or the prostration of all religion. ‘Toleration’ was the watchword on the one hand, which of course enlisted all the prejudices and all the sense of long-endured grievances, that had place in the bosoms and ranks of the dissenting sects; while a real and anxious solicitude for Christianity itself preyed on the feelings of the opposite party. The contest thickened, and grew more serious and determined on both sides. The pulpit and the press laboured, the former in some instances unbecomingly, in the ranks. At last a Convention of the State, for the construction and adoption of a new Constitution, was resolved on by the popular voice. The work was done; all the former and exclusive advantages of the ‘Standing Order’ were taken away, and they were reduced to a common level, standing on their own merits as a religious sect, and left to the naked influence of their virtue. The public mind settled down into quiet; every body, every religious sect, and all the component elements of the two great political parties, went about their own business. Christians and Christian ministers could now find time to work for their Master, without being jealous of, or quarreling with each other, on account of political advantages, enjoyed by one party and denied to another. Religion prospered; old animosities were forgotten; infidelity became less bold, and gradually disappeared; and I question whether a man can be found in the State of Connecticut, layman or minister, belonging to that great and most numerous of all the Christian bodies, formerly called the ‘Standing Order,’ that would be willing to go back to the old state of things, if it were offered, and that with the assurance of a perpetuity without opposition. And if Dr Dwight had lived to see and enjoy this better, quiet, and happy state of things, he would have rejoiced, and died in peace with his blessing on it. He was honest in opposing it; and so were all his brethren. His brethren are all converted; and he would not have remained alone. So we may presume; nay, we are confident.” Pages 25, 26.

The doing away of the “Standing Order” was considered by many there, as it now is here, to be a “fear-

ful experiment." Let us look at the result, to see whether the fears were well or ill-founded:

"It was not without very serious apprehensions that many evangelical Christians witnessed this abandonment of what they esteemed the good old way of supporting the gospel. Some predicted the destruction of many churches, and a sudden dearth of religious instruction. The result did not verify their fears. Instead of withdrawing their support from the gospel, the people brought to its aid a cheerful liberality, which had till now been kept in the back ground. Ministers became more active, and were more extensively blessed in the discharge of their official duties. The success which has crowned the voluntary efforts of the churches is encouraging them to a new enterprise for themselves; which is to sustain feeble and dilapidated congregations in their endeavours to procure the stated ministrations of the gospel. *More has been done within ten years to collect new congregations, and supply the destitute with the means of salvation, in New England, than had been done in a quarter of a century before.* And" (mark this my fellow-Christians) "the measure of divine influence vouchsafed to the churches has been in proportion to their liberality." Pages 28, 29.

"And take, my Lord, the following remarks in the Report, as expressive of the confidence of the Board in the American public:—

"The conviction is extending, and becoming more and more practical, that the great things to be aimed at by churches and individual Christians, is *the conversion of the world.*" [!]

"Also: 'The churches of New England, though far below the standard of missionary feeling and action required in the gospel, are obviously rising. There seems to be a general expectation of doing more and more every year. If suitable men could be obtained for missionaries, in sufficient number to require such an amount of funds, and a call were made upon the churches, *New England alone* would cheerfully furnish more funds during the next year, than your treasury has received in any one year since the organization of the Board. Nothing is wanting to obtain funds, to any reasonable amount, but suitable missionaries to expend them.'

"I know New England, my Lord. I was born and bred there; and I fully concur in this opinion. I believe, that New England alone, *one-fifth* of the community, on which that Board relies, would carry the entire burden lightly,—would increase the amount without increasing the weight, and supply funds as fast as missionaries could be found to 'expend them'; and in the mean time advance proportionately in all her other benevolent operations. And this, my Lord,

is that very New England, which has lately demolished her State Religious Establishments. Does she want them again, think you, my Lord? And such too is the common spirit of the wide community.

"I have before merely intimated the resolution of the American Bible Society to offer compact with the British and Foreign Bible Society, and other kindred institutions, *to give the Bible to the whole world in twenty years!* This resolution, it is expected, will be brought to London by an American delegation next May. I will not presume to predict how it will be entertained here. But I assure you, my Lord, that America is in earnest in this proposal, and I hope she will not be left alone. I assure you that America has not come to this determination, without having done something in the way of counting the cost. In *two years* she has given the Bible to every family in the Republic, that was without it, and would accept it. In *two years* she has filled the whole land with Sabbath schools, where they were wanting. And these are only so many single expressions of the spirit, promptitude, and effective energy of voluntary associations. They outstrip every thing, but the wings of hope, and the ardour of a genuine Christian philanthropy. When convened at their great anniversaries, the state and prospects of the country and of the world, morally and religiously, are spread out before them. The *past* is reviewed, the *present* surveyed, and the *possible* in futurity is made a subject of calculation from experience; and then, together with a cherished remembrance of all incipient and progressive measures, some great and sublime resolution is propounded—is discussed—is carried—and each goes to his field of labour and of influence, to *attempt* what in faith and prayer had been resolved." Pages 51—53.

These statements are well-fitted to confirm in our minds the conviction, that we are always safe in following Bible principles, and that in proportion as we humbly do so, in the spirit of diffidence of ourselves and confidence in God, God will bless us, and "prosper the work of our hands."

I have detained the meeting much too long. I must conclude, by expressing it as my deliberate sentiment, that the connection between Church and State, which we seek to abolish, is injurious to both; that, in its principle, it is unscriptural, impolitic, and unjust,—and, in its consequences, in many ways pernicious:—that, by the disunion of the two, the State will be freed from

many burdens, and drags, and disquietudes, which impede its government, disturb its peace, and mar its prosperity;—and that the Church,—all invidious distinctions being at an end,—all parties placed on an equal footing,—will put forth new energies, bring into operation all her resources, grow in union, and, with a holy emulation of love and zeal, carry forward the cause of God to the triumph of its millennial glory;—when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

APPENDIX.

EXPOSURE FURTHER EXPOSED.

THERE are some points touched upon in the foregoing Speech, to which, as well as to the strictures which the views given of them have called forth, I may take a future opportunity of again adverting. I embrace the occasion now afforded me of offering a few remarks on a long note in reference to my "Exposure Exposed," affixed to the third edition of the Exposure, by its anonymous author, Anglo-Scotus.

With regard to the *style* of my "Exposure Exposed," those only are competent judges of its appropriateness who have read Anglo-Scotus; and to their judgment I can, with all confidence, leave the decision, whether the severity was or was not deserved. Let those condemn who have not learned to discriminate between the treatment merited by a nameless and dark defamer, and that which is due to an open and honest opponent. The use made of the terms of severe reprehension by Anglo-Scotus himself, I quite anticipated. I did not expect the writer of such a pamphlet either to be very sensible of their appropriateness, or, if sensible of it, ingenuously to acknowledge it. The style has been designated, by others as well as by him, *wrathful*. Never was there a greater mistake. While I was satisfied that there were no terms of condemnation too strong for the whole spirit and character of the "New Exposure," I can assure Anglo-Scotus and all whom it may concern, that my strictures upon it were written, not in the heat of pas-

sion, but with perfect deliberation, and in the calmness of imperturbable scorn. I do not feel at all surprised, that in the periodical organ of the Church strong language should occasionally be applied to myself. It is no more than what might be expected. But, on the present occasion, I must be allowed to express much more than surprise, that in a work professedly conducted on Christian principles, while wrath, and bitterness, and even impiety, or something that "looks very like it," are ascribed to me, such a production as that of Anglo-Scotus should pass without the slightest note of disapprobation! Is it, indeed, *possible*, I have said to myself, that the species of warfare to which that writer has had recourse can be approved? Or, if it be approved by the Editors of that periodical, am I to consider this as at all a standard of opinion and feeling on the subject among the ministers and members of the Establishment? I will not—I cannot. I have more respect for the judgment of many whom I know, and a higher estimate of their Christian principle, than to believe it. I know there are some in the Church, and I persuade myself there are many, who are ashamed of the pamphlet of Anglo-Scotus, and hold it in no less detestation than I do myself.

The Note is of a piece with the pamphlet:—the author of the pamphlet alone could have given birth to the note:—it fathers itself. Anglo-Scotus, it will be recollected, had said, "Let the Rev. Dr Wardlaw tell us, if he does not know a Voluntary Church in Glasgow in the debt of about £9,000?" What will the Public say of the candour—what will they say of the principle of the man, who is capable of evading the charge of having published a false representation of the fact as to the amount of debt on the said chapel, by the despicable subterfuge that his words are *not a statement*; they are only, forsooth, a *query*! Yet such is actually the ground which Anglo-Scotus takes. "Of the debt," says he, "I had made no statement whatever:"—"A *false statement* it could not be justly called—for a *statement at all*, false or true, it was not." I should reckon it a waste of words to offer a single comment on an evasion so palpable, and withal so paltry, and so unprincipled.

"I confided," he says, "in my informant's accuracy, and introduced into my *query* concerning it the sum which I believed it to be:"—Yes, and intended that the public also should believe it to be. Surely, if his Church friends were not ashamed of him before, they cannot but blush for him now. Phoh!

Anglo-Scotus says, that "respecting the Doctor's meeting-house, only *one* statement had by him been published." Well, and what was it? It ran in these terms:—that "in England and in Scotland, and particularly in the city of Glasgow, money has for some time past been begged from persons of all religious denominations, nay, even from elders of the Establishment, for keeping out of the hands of creditors Dr Wardlaw's meeting-house—that stupendous specimen of Voluntary speculation." And what will the public think again of the candour and the principle of the man, who, having recourse to another evasion, and one, if possible, more pitiful still, unblushingly affirms respecting the "Exposure Exposed," that "from the beginning to the end of it, there is not to be found a direct contradiction to any one statement which Anglo-Scotus has published?" This is passing strange; if indeed any thing disingenuous can be strange from such a quarter. I will not, in refutation of this extraordinary assertion, have recourse to the italics prefixed to the amount collected for the liquidation of the debt during the last three years—"contributed *exclusively by the church and congregation*;"—of which "italics" he says, "they seem used to insinuate a denial of my statement respecting the begging of assistance—but they really do nothing of the sort!" Neither will I have recourse to the terms of Mr Farie's letter, in which the statement is pronounced, and with the emphasis of italics too—"false in every particular." But I appeal to the common sense of mankind, what constitutes the most unequivocal and satisfactory kind of denial:—Whether it does not consist in such a simple and honest exhibition of facts as clearly and completely disproves and falsifies the statement? After such an exhibition of facts has been presented, nothing can be more nugatory—nothing more thoroughly a work of superero-

gation, than formally to set about deducing the inference, and putting the denial into words. Is not a *matter of fact* denial incomparably more satisfactory than a *verbal* denial? The public will think so—and will treat with the disdain which it deserves this second unworthy quirk.

But does the *matter of fact* statement really amount to a denial? Anglo-Scotus says it does not. And how does he establish his negation? How, but by going back to certain contributions which were received from Christian friends of different religious persuasions at the time when the chapel was erected! Will Anglo-Scotus lay his hand on his heart and say, whether these were, *bonâ fide*, the contributions he had in his mind when he penned the charge that “FOR SOME TIME PAST money has been begged from persons of all religious denominations, in England and in Scotland, to KEEP DR WARD-LAW’S MEETING-HOUSE OUT OF THE HANDS OF CREDITORS?” Who can believe it? What have sums contributed fifteen years ago to do with the begging of money at all hands “*for some time past*?”—and what have sums contributed towards the *erection* of a place of worship to do with mendicant solicitations “*to keep it out of the hands of creditors*?”—solicitations necessitated of course by the pressing importunities of these creditors during the said “*some time past*!”—*i. e.* recently, and even now! Where is the ingenuousness of the man, who, finding that he was not in possession of a single fact to support his charge, endeavours to blind the eyes of his readers by referring to contributions which have no more relation to his “*some time past*” than if they had been given for the building of Noah’s ark? Had Anglo-Scotus charged us with having asked and received contributions at the time when the Chapel was built, and *that* had been denied by us, his reply would have been relevant and conclusive:—but, as the matter actually stands, it must be classed with the two former, as a third most unworthy evasion.

The acknowledgment, in the prefixed notice, of the contributions referred to, has been characterized as “*tardy*.” My readers will believe me when I say, that the

sole cause of the omission of such acknowledgment was, not any unwillingness to make it, but the simple and natural circumstance that my mind was fixed entirely on what was of recent date by the “*some time past*” of Anglo-Scotus; so that what was done at the erection of the Chapel never once occurred to me till after publication, when, to more than one of my friends, I expressed my regret that it had not, lest, in the present sensitive state of public feeling, the omission should be construed into a lack of ingenuousness and gratitude.

With regard to the deduction made, in estimating the amount of debt on the Chapel, of the value of cellarage, there is not, I presume, an intelligent merchant in the city, who does not recognise the legitimacy and reasonableness of the principle on which that deduction proceeds.—And while I leave that item to the decision of mercantile men, I feel no difficulty in leaving to the common sense of the public the extraordinary charge against my own *veracity*, so ingeniously extracted from my representing the statement respecting George-Street Chapel as a *specimen* or *sample* of the contents at large of Anglo-Scotus’s pamphlet. Since a sample *is* a specimen of the whole, I have, it seems, by so representing it, *affirmed* the whole to be equally false with this part, and affirmed it, not indeed *contrary* to knowledge, but at any rate *without* knowledge! If this is the only way in which an imputation can be thrown on my veracity, my character is in no great jeopardy. Was there a single reader, I wonder, who misunderstood me, when, after having spoken of a specimen and a sample, I put the hypothetical question, “*If there be just the same proportion of truth in other representations as in this—query, How much will there be in the pamphlet?*” I may now conclude, after what has been stated, by putting the same hypothetical question in a somewhat different form:—“*If there be just as much principle in his other representations as there is in his defence of this—query, How much will there be in the pamphlet?*”

Who Anglo-Scotus is, I know not, for I am not entitled to proceed upon whispers and surmises. When he speaks of the Trustees of George-Street Chapel as

"bent on having his name," he adds, "*which was out of the question.*" And why was it out of the question? It could be for one reason only,—that all *masked assassins* are dastards. I say again, let no one condemn such language as too strong, who has not read, and considered, and compared with the spirit and precepts of the New Testament, the entire pamphlet of Anglo-Scotus.

With regard to the *Glasgow City Churches*, I have only to repeat, that it was distinctly on the understanding of its *official* character and authority, that I inserted the statement which has since occasioned so keen a contest;—and to add, that, as one important item in it turns out to be avowedly *not official*—I mean the £8689 12s. 6d. of interest, charged "in name of rent,"—I set it aside. Let the reader observe, however, on what ground. The charge may be perfectly correct and fair;—it may rest on principles of calculation palpably legitimate;—but it is *not official*; which, from the title of the statement I had, inadvertently, conceived the whole to be. Were another impression called for of the "*Exposure Exposed*" I should, *on this account alone*, leave it out. In the meantime, I express no judgment on the merits of the statistical and arithmetical controversy to which it has given rise; a controversy into which, important as it is in its own place, I have neither leisure nor inclination minutely to enter. It is in excellent hands.

MEMORIAL.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EARL
GREY, as *Head of His Majesty's*
Administration.

We, inhabitants of the city and vicinity of Glasgow, assembled at a Public Meeting, beg leave to present to your Lordship the following Memorial, on the civil Establishment of Religion within the British Empire, and on the injury done to the cause of Christianity, and the many evils accruing to Dissenters, from the existence and influence of that Establishment.

We approach your Lordship with sentiments of sincere and profound respect, for your eminent talents and acquirements, and the great services which, in circumstances of uncommon difficulty and peril, you have been honoured to render to your country; and we have too much confidence in your Lordship's manliness and candour to apprehend that your Lordship will take offence, if, in this our Memorial, we speak with a freedom and a boldness, befitting the solemn importance of the subjects to which it refers, the character of the present crisis, and our own standing and rights as freemen.

From the addresses which have already been presented to your Lordship by dissenting bodies in various parts of the Empire, your Lordship's mind must be familiar with the leading facts respecting the numbers and the exertions of the Dissenters. In Scotland, there are from 700 to 800 congregations not connected with the National Church; and although in some of the great towns, as in Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as in many rural districts, the number of worshippers among Dissenters greatly exceeds that in the communion of the Establishment, we are not prepared to affirm on which side the majority lies, taking Scotland as a whole. Like their brethren in England, the Scottish Dissenters build and uphold their places of worship at their own expense; they

contribute liberally for the support of their own poor; they bear their share in the expenses connected with the support of the poor, belonging to the community in general, where these are defrayed by assessment; and they contribute largely to various benevolent and religious Institutions for the benefit of their own country, of the remote dependencies of Great Britain, and of other lands.

The *special grievances* of which Scottish Dissenters have to complain, and for the redress of which they desire the influence of your Lordship, and of your Lordship's colleagues, are these. They are compelled to contribute to the erection and repairs of edifices in which they do not worship, to the payment of ministers of religion from whose services they derive no advantage, and to the support of a system from many parts of which they conscientiously dissent. Many of their members are harassed and injured by processes at law, to which the building of churches, or the augmentation of the salary of incumbents, frequently and unavoidably gives occasion. In consequence of the subjection of parochial education to the local ecclesiastical authorities, they are excluded, not, indeed, from the seminaries for the instruction of their youth, but from the place of Teachers, in the 930 parishes of Scotland, as they also are virtually from Professorships in the Colleges. While from these causes, and others that shall be named, they feel that they are regarded as a discountenanced and degraded caste by the existing laws of their country,—it must be added, that occupying, as they do, common ground as Dissenters with their English brethren, they cannot but feel alive to the peculiar injuries inflicted on Dissenters in that department of the Empire, and consider these as injuring and stigmatizing the whole Dissenting body, and as dishonourable to the country in which they exist. Your Lordship will understand us to refer to the unjust and compulsory abstraction of the money of Dissenters to maintain a worship which they conscientiously disown; and to the interdicting of legal marriage, the right of sepulture in the public cemeteries, the advantage of the common registers, and even of access to the national seats of learning, except on the humiliating condition of conformity to the dominant church.

We can hardly believe it possible that your Lordship can shut your eyes to the flagrant wickedness of these impositions. In the name of sacred justice, we ask your Lordship,

whether, placing yourself and the religious party to which your Lordship belongs, in the room of Dissenters, you can affirm that you are doing to others as you would that others should do unto you? With what sentiments would the breasts of your Lordship and of churchmen in general be filled, were Dissenters, in their turn, to treat you, as you continue to treat Dissenters? What have Dissenters done to their country, to its government, to your Lordship, to merit the continuance of these long inflicted injuries? Is it for the honour of the Government of Great Britain, thus to brand and stigmatize, without cause, so large and so virtuous a portion of her people? Can that government claim the characters, *just, impartial, paternal*, that consents to perpetuate these wrongs? Looking up to Almighty God, the Patron of righteousness, or judging as between man and man, can your Lordship believe it safe, thus to intermingle injustice with the institutions and administration of the State; and to sap the foundations of public virtue by so inuring all classes of the people to the spectacle of legalized unrighteousness, as to accustom them to look upon it without emotion? Above all, can your Lordship imagine that the sacred cause of Christianity can ever be advanced, can fail to be retarded in its progress, and dishonoured in the public view, by its overt association, in the constitution and practice of a great country, with this system of injustice and wrong? Your Lordship will forgive us for expressing our conviction, that a small degree of generosity, or of justice, directed to the Dissenters, by Churchmen and by the State, or even of due regard to the honour of their own name, and that of our common country, would have induced them, long ago, to concede to Dissenters those claims which they now cease to ask as a boon, but demand as matter of right.

We go farther. We cannot but trace these grievances to the unscriptural and sinful alliance of the Church with the State; nor shall we ever regard our just claims as conceded, or the religion of Christ placed in circumstances the most favourable for its triumph in our country, until this alliance be finally dissolved. We avow to your Lordship the following principles:

No human government has the right of interposing betwixt God and the consciences of the people, by legislating in religious matters; which is the province, not of man, but of God.

The Church of Christ is, by his high appointment, independent of the kingdoms of this world, receiving its constitution, doctrines, and laws, from Him only; nor has the Christian Church any Head, supreme or subordinate, but Jesus Christ, her only Lord and King.

The State has no more right to interfere with the Christian Church (except with the civil obedience of her members in all lawful things), than the Christian Church has to interfere with the State. Nor would it be a greater usurpation and presumption for the Church to legislate for the State, than for the State to legislate for the Church.

The legislative enactment of a particular creed, and endowment of a particular sect, is injustice to the rest of the community; as it compels the dissenting portion of the subjects, and that in opposition to their conscientious convictions, to contribute to the favoured sect; as it inflicts a pecuniary penalty for nonconformity; and as it adds a stigma to that penalty, so that persecution, more or less severe, is inherent in the character, (as it has invariably been apparent in the history,) of every exclusive establishment of religion.

Your Lordship will not, we trust, lend your ear to the averment, that with whatever inconveniences a civil establishment of religion may be attended, it is necessary for the preservation of religion, especially in the poorer districts of the land. Can your Lordship believe that *that* is necessary for the preservation of Christianity, for which Jesus Christ and his apostles have made no provision? Can your Lordship cast your eyes on the state of England and not perceive that to voluntary exertion, in a great degree, it is indebted for the religious instruction it enjoys—that in the poorer districts pre-eminently, as in Wales, religious instruction is derived from the Dissenters mainly—and that the constitution and administration of the Established Church—particularly as appearing in the unwise elevation of its dignitaries to a place among the peers of the realm, a position the most alien from their character and their duties, as professedly ministers of a kingdom not of this world, to which they have no more official right than any similar number of other ministers of the gospel, and from which the suffrages of the empire would indignantly displace them; in the constant agitation and scramble for clerical preferment exhibited to the public eye; in the buying and selling of livings like any marketable

commodity; in the vesting of the disposal of these livings, for obviously secular purposes, in the Crown, in the Bishops, in Corporations, in the Aristocracy, and in other evils which it is unnecessary to name;—that these have alienated from the Established Church the great body of the English people, and have done more to prevent the progress of true piety, and to favour irreligion, immorality, and infidelity, than any other causes that can be assigned for their prevalence.

We may add, that the relative numbers of Churchmen and Dissenters seem to render a change in the existing arrangements indispensable to the satisfaction of the empire. Your Lordship is aware, that the highest authorities on the constitution have conceded, that the only reason that can justify the preference of one sect is, that it outnumbered the rest. Yet your Lordship must know, that even this pretext ceases, by whatever standard the numbers of those connected, and not connected, with the established sects may be determined, the former now forming but a minority in the empire; while that minority is virtually reduced by the rapidly growing numbers within the pale of the Establishments who avow the conviction, that the time for legal compulsion in religion has passed away—that it is as unjust that Dissenters should be taxed for the support of the Established worship, as that the adherents of the latter should be taxed for the worship of the Dissenters—and that the honour and peace of the empire, and the advancement of true Christianity in the land, require, that the alliance of the Church with the State should be severed, that religion should be left to the free support of its friends, and that all denominations in the empire should be placed, as fellow-citizens, on the same level.

The more rancorous enemies of the Dissenters, it cannot be unknown to your Lordship, labour most industriously to impress the public mind with the conviction, that the present movements against civil Establishments of religion originate in a plot to accomplish the destruction of the Church, in a desire to participate in her spoils, and in personal hostility towards her functionaries. Before God and our country we repel with indignation these most calumnious fictions; we defy our opponents to point to a shadow of evidence in their support; and we cannot but trust that your Lordship and your Lordship's colleagues, are too candid and too just, to receive these unsubstantiated charges, of which the princi-

ples, the characters, the measures, and the writings of the accused, afford ample and irrefragable refutation.

On these grounds, we implore your Lordship to take the condition of the Dissenters, and their claims, into your mature and candid consideration. From no hand would they receive the concession of these claims more gladly than from that of your Lordship; but we cannot forbear expressing our persuasion, that based as these are, on reason, on equity, and on the word of God, and now demanded by the voice of so large and influential a portion of the British people, it will not be much longer in the power of any Ministry, or of Parliament itself, to refuse them.

Signed by the Chairman in name and by appointment
of the Meeting, held at Glasgow, 6th March, 1834.

JAMES JOHNSTON.

PETITION.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND, IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED,

The Humble Petition of the Undersigned, Inhabitants of the City of Glasgow and its Vicinity,

SHEWETH,

That your Petitioners beg leave to represent to your Honourable House the unfavourable circumstances in which British Dissenters are still placed; to express their conviction that these and other evils arise from the existence and influence of the connection of the Church with the State, by the Constitution and Laws of Great Britain; and to Petition your Honourable House to redress the evils complained of, by removing the cause to which, in the judgment of your Petitioners, they are to be ascribed.

That your Petitioners have first to complain of the grievances of Scottish Dissenters, in their being compelled to con-

tribute, directly or indirectly, to the support of a Church, whose spiritual prosperity they sincerely desire, but from which they conscientiously remain in a state of separation—in the exclusion of their Members from the Parochial Schools in the quality of Teachers, from Professorships in the Universities, or from any other place of civil emolument or honour, accessible exclusively to Churchmen—and in their being regarded in the eye of the Law as disqualified or degraded, on account of their Dissent.

That your Petitioners sympathize with the grievous wrongs done to their English brethren, regarding these, as if they were inflicted on themselves; in their being compelled to support a Church of which they disapprove—in their being interdicted from Legal Marriage, from Sepulture in the public Cemeteries, from the advantages of Registration, and even of admission to the Seats of Learning, unless at the expense of express or virtual conformity, in opposition to their conscientious convictions—and in the stigma affixed to them by these and other legal indignities, which, in the estimation of your Petitioners, it is as dishonourable and unjust in the law to inflict, as it is painful for the Dissenters to endure.

That the real origin of these wrongs is to be found, in the interference of the Legislature with the religious belief and practice of the subjects; in the selecting of one sect, or of more, for exclusive establishment and endowment; and in the unjust and mischievous elevation of the Dignitaries of a favoured Sect to a place in the Legislature; measures against which your Petitioners complain to your Honourable House, as unsanctioned by Jesus Christ and his Apostles—as opposed to the letter and spirit of their inspired injunctions—as a presumptuous intrusion on the part of the Civil Power into a department of duty which lies exclusively betwixt man and his Maker—as essentially unjust, compelling the whole community to contribute to the support of one favoured Party, inflicting on all Dissenters the penalty of a Tax for their conscientious nonconformity, and virtually or expressly branding them as a discountenanced and merely tolerated caste—as tending to the disunion of the members of the State, who ought to be equally favoured, if their submission and fidelity be equal—and as not only unnecessary to the interests of religion, but hostile to the purity and independence

of the Christian Church, and the influence of true Christianity among the people.

That in the judgment of your Petitioners, the pretext for the continuance of this system of injustice, favouritism, and mischief, arising from its being approved of by the great body of the nation, can no longer be pleaded; since it is unquestionable, both that those connected with the Established Sects, however respectable, are now a minority in the Empire, and that many within their pale coincide with their Dissenting Brethren, in desiring the concession of the claims of the Dissenters, and the total separation of the Church from the State.

May it, therefore, please your Honourable House to take the claims of the Dissenters into your speedy and favourable consideration, to redress the grievances complained of, and to take measures in order to the dissolution of the unjust, unscriptural, and injurious connection which subsists betwixt the Church and the State in this country,

And your Petitioners shall ever pray.

GLASGOW:

FULLARTON AND CO. PRINTERS, VILLAFIELD.